

2011 Bamford Implementation Commissioned Call

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Title of research project: Improving pathways and care for young people in NI with mental health problems in the transition from CAMHS to adult services (IMPACT).

Abstract: This study aims to determine what is the best way to organise the interface between services for children and young people and for adults in order to support the transition from childhood to adulthood? A similar study in England (TRACK) found that only 4% of young people experienced the ideal transition. In many areas, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services are designed to meet the needs of a wide range of disorders such as Attention Deficit and Hyper Activity Disorder (ADHD) or Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), whereas adult mental health is usually restricted to people with psychosis or severe depression. Consequently, many such young people may find that on reaching adult services there is a lack of appropriate treatment and care. Many others, particularly young men with complex problems, disengage from services only to make contact later with more intractable problems. We propose to undertake a mixed methods study in which we will examine the transition of young people aged 16-18 years referred to CAMHS, systematically detailing their pathways to adult services and the involvement of community and primary care services. We will explore health and social outcomes including engagement and services satisfaction. The study will examine barriers to effective transition and will include professional and family perspectives. The team is comprised of experienced health service researchers, including academic psychiatrists from the UK, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland who have expertise in CAMHS and early intervention services, in collaboration with senior NHS managers and young service users. The findings from this study will significantly contribute to the improvement in early intervention and continuity of care for young people in Northern Ireland.